



STATE OF IDAHO

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DIRK KEMPTHORNE
Governor

PATRICK A. TAKASUGI
Director

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Wayne Hoffman
(208) 332-8671

DIRECTOR TAKASUGI FINDS NO ECONOMICALLY VIALE ALTERNATIVE AVAILABLE FOR FIELD BURNING

ISDA'S SUCCESSFUL SMOKE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM WILL CONTINUE

(BOISE) After reviewing the latest data available, Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi has determined that there is no economically viable alternative to open burning of crop residue. Director Takasugi's 2005 Determination, released today, clears the way for carefully-managed field burning to continue this summer.

"Based upon the record provided to me for review, I find that no economically viable alternatives to field burning currently exist for Idaho producers," Takasugi said in his Determination. Most significant, Takasugi noted, is the University of Idaho's research on feasible field burning alternatives for bluegrass stands. In a letter to the director, the University indicated that there are "no proven economically sustainable, non-thermal residue management systems available" to Idaho growers.

Under Idaho law, the director must determine whether there is an economically viable alternative to burning that would allow growers to still dispose of residue, increase yields and control diseases, weeds and insects. While the law doesn't require the director to make an annual review, Takasugi does so anyway in order to examine the latest available information.

Earlier this year, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture solicited comments on possible alternatives to field burning. Of the responses received, none provided an economically viable alternative to field burning.

Takasugi credits the department's progressive, highly-coordinated smoke management program.

"We're proud of the great care and effort that has gone into the department's coordination of field burns," Takasugi said. "Our efforts have resulted in a more than 80 percent drop in the number of smoke complaints. Burns are more thoughtfully managed, with an eye toward air quality, and our agricultural neighbors are better off as a result."

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